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On being told of the reward offered for any of the captives recovered, he started by land to go to Magadesho (without receiving anything in advance, being told that his reward depended entirely on his success) to rescue them. On arriving at Lamoo, the Governor finding on him the proclamations, seized and imprisoned him, and, owing to the difficulty of communication at that season, he was seven months in confinement before information reached the Consul at Zanzibar. But it is not at all likely that Hajee Noor would have undertaken this long and perilous journey entirely at his own cost, had he not good reason for believing that he would be successful in rescuing the captives, and thus earning the promised reward.

Colonel RIGBY, after reading his Paper, added that he had that day seen for the first time the owner of the *St. Abbs*, and had received information from him which gave a strong confirmation to the reports stated in the Paper. Amongst the things brought to Zanzibar, as taken from the wreck of an English ship, were several Masonic ornaments—an apron, diploma, &c., some billiard-balls, astronomical instruments, surgical instruments, and books. The statement of the owner of the *St. Abbs* showed that these articles corresponded to articles known to have been on board that vessel. These circumstances showed the probability that either the hull of the vessel was washed ashore entire, or that part of the vessel did so, and therefore that the twenty-two Englishmen who were missing reached the coast of Africa alive. They had probably been in a state of captivity in that country for the last ten years. The object of alluding to this matter was the hope of inducing some measures for the rescue of these unfortunate persons, if they were still in existence.

The PRESIDENT said it would be a very easy thing to ascertain, by offering rewards, whether any of these fine young men, thus unhappily lost to their friends and countrymen, could be recovered. The parents of many of them were still living in expectation of seeing their sons again, and he sincerely hoped that Her Majesty's Government would take some active steps in the matter; there surely never could be a more worthy occasion than this for asking assistance from them.

3. *Notes on the Niger.* By T. VALENTINE ROBINS, F.R.G.S.

MR. ROBINS resided at the settlement of Lukoja, on the Niger, from September, 1864, to October 1865, having been left there by Lieut. Knowles, commander of H.M.S.S. *Investigator*, to assist Lieut. Bourcier, the successor of Dr. Baikie,* founder of the settlement. The *Investigator* entered the mouth of the river, August 30th. For many miles the Niger is described as very picturesque, subdivided into innumerable creeks, and varied with islands covered with a magnificent tropical vegetation, growing apparently out of the water.

* See 'Proceedings,' vol. ix. p. 74.

After passing Onitsha, a distant range of mountains came into view, and boulders and reefs began to occur in the bed of the river. Lukoja is situated on a verdant plain at the foot of Mount Patte ("Patte" being the native name for "mountain"), and opposite the mouth of the Tsadda. The settlement is founded on a tract of land ceded to the English Government by Masāba, king of Bida. King Masāba was described by Mr. Robins as a noble specimen of his race, with powerful frame, and bold and open expression of countenance. The Niger commenced to fall at the beginning of October, and by April 14th had receded 32 feet; still continuing to fall until the end of May. On the 1st of June it began to rise, and by September 10th had risen 41 feet 6 inches. It still continued to rise until the 28th of September, when it reached the height of nearly 50 feet, but this last rise was unusual. The river occupied 243 days in falling, and 122 in rising; there are therefore eight months of dry, and four months of wet weather. The table-topped hill behind Lukoja is 1100 feet high, and to the rear of it is a long extent of uninhabited forest country, which for three days' march is considered to be English territory, according to the treaty with King Masāba. A small river, the Adokodo, flows through this tract of land, and enters the Niger a little south of Lukoja.

Mr. Robins exhibited to the meeting a large number of drawings in oil and water-colours, illustrative of the scenery, natives, and vegetable productions of the neighbourhood of Lukoja.

The PRESIDENT said he believed that most geographers were acquainted with the merits of Dr. Baikie; and he was happy to say that the British Government had all along been alive to those merits, and had supported his settlement of Lukoja up to the present time. There was now, however, a doubt whether the Government would continue to support the establishment he had founded, and which had been described by Mr. Robins. He would read a letter on that subject addressed to the Assistant Secretary by Commodore Eardley Wilmot, the distinguished naval officer who had so long commanded on the West Coast of Africa and who had taken great interest in the expeditions up the Niger.

"MY DEAR MR. BATES,

"What the late lamented Dr. Baikie was unable to state before he died will, I trust, be now brought before the Society by this gentleman (Mr. Robins) in a familiar manner.

"In consequence of my position as Commodore on the West Coast of Africa, I was mainly instrumental in sending up the last *three* expeditions, viz., 1863, 1864, and 1865; I am, therefore, as you may well imagine, deeply interested in the success attending them. It would be a thousand pities, and materially detract from the high position which England now holds amongst the powerful chiefs that own the country bordering on both sides the river, were the Government to give up all future intercourse with these chiefs, and allow mercantile companies to brave the difficulties as they best can. An opening has been made, which, if resolutely persevered in, cannot fail to establish the

most friendly relations between us, and develop the resources of this rich and important part of Western Africa. If the natives find that the Government continue to show an interest in their advancement, and in the opening out of a mutually profitable trade, I am quite certain the chiefs will meet us more than half-way, and believe that we are really in earnest as regards the future prosperity of their country. But if, on the contrary, we desert them now, at this season of success, the consequence will be—what every one must foresee—a want of confidence will be engendered; no belief will be given to our assertions; we shall be laughed at and derided; no encouragement given to our missionaries or merchants; possibly expulsion from the country, with robbery and violence. Nor can we be surprised should this sad state of things occur. But if we keep our word, and do not break faith with them, the happiest results may be anticipated. Cotton in abundance will be planted; coffee, the sugar-cane, indigo, &c., will yield its increase; while ivory, gum, palm oil, &c., will find their way to our trading establishments in large quantities. There must be a *certainly* of sale; otherwise the natives can neither afford to plant, nor will they be disposed to look upon us as otherwise than a mere body of adventurers come to make all they can and then decamp.

“A small steamer, with a naval officer duly authorised, will do more good in establishing confidence and in preserving order than all the trading-vessels of Europe.

“Very faithfully yours,

“A. F. EARDLEY WILMOT.”

Mr. LAWSON (a gentleman of colour) said he had heard with pain of the brutalities which had been committed by some of his fellow countrymen. He had, however, always maintained and, he believed, should always adhere to the opinion that any European traveller might travel from the Cape of Good Hope to the Mediterranean, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea, without being molested, provided he paid proper reverence to the religion of the country, and dealt with leniency and kindness towards the natives. As soon as the natives saw that the Europeans were not trying to take advantage of them they would join with them hand and heart.

4. *Papers relating to the recent Volcanic Eruptions in Santorin.*

(Communicated to Sir R. I. MURCHISON, by LORD CLARENDON and the Hon. Mr. ERSKINE, H.M. Minister at Athens.)

THE principal documents received by the Society relating to the recent volcanic eruptions are a series of letters from Dr. Schmidt, Director of the Royal Observatory at Athens, who had been despatched with three colleagues, on board the screw-steamer *Aphroessa*, to the island of Santorin, with a view to observe the phenomena. He states that the first trace of the revival of volcanic action in the crater-harbour of Santorin was perceived on the 26th of January. It occurred on the islet Nea Kameni, and consisted in the slow subsidence beneath the sea of the little settlement called Vulkano, situated on the south-eastern shore of the island. Nearly at the same time a new volcano began to rise on the island of Nea Kameni, a little to the south-west of Vulkano,